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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 23, 1968

Saturday - 12:20 pm

FOR THE PRESIDENT

I wonder whether some kind of sequence like this might be useful:

1. North Vietnam tells the Swiss they are seriously prepared to take part in negotiations after the unconditional halt of the bombing.

2. You announce that you have instructed our air forces to halt the bombing north of the 20th parallel,

-- and that you have sent representatives to Geneva and Rangoon to await the North Vietnamese.

3. They say that isn't enough; we've got to stop it altogether.

4. We say, we cannot stop it altogether so long as men and supplies are pouring down the Ho Chi Minh trail.

We show photographs of this and other evidence of the invasion over the past two months.

5. We say, "We'd like to stop the bombing altogether. If you will not mount an attack on our bases or on the cities in I Corps, or upon Saigon, and if you will stop the shelling of South Vietnam from the DMZ and positions north of the DMZ, we will stop it altogether during the period in which you refrain from such attacks. And we will send our man to Geneva or Rangoon."

6. They say that's insulting; we must stop our bombing and all other acts of war, etc.

7. We say we regret they have responded in the same old way -- "You disarm, while we pistol-whip you."

Purpose of the exercise: to show the American people that we are willing to do every reasonable thing to bring about talks.

Each step must be in the open -- not reported after the fact. We are genuinely seeking peace, and we made several offers and counter-offers.

Harry

Harry C. McPherson, Jr.